Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0466FL-1 for Hillsborough County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough County School System has developed a comprehensive and well thought out plan for reform that directly targets its population. At the core of this initiative is a strong focus on personalized learning through its plan named Personalized Education to Accelerate Knowledge, or PEAK.The PEAK initiative will incorporate the principles of Universal Design so that the components of the program are accessible to all students. Additionally the district plans to initiate a student dashboard so that students and their parents will have access to a timely resource portal for real-time data, intervention strategies, and external resources. This tool will greatly enhance student- and parent-access to vital information and facilitate "buy-in" of personalized learning, as a significant part of its personalized student support.

	Available	Score
(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	10

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough Schools will be well served by this laudable initiative in that 41,788 students are projected to participate in PEAK, 22,271 of whom are from low income families and 41,159 who are considered high-need. The number of educators participating in this initiative will be 3,212. These large numbers will greatly increase the visibility and probable success of PEAK.

	Available	Score
(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	9

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Project PEAK contains the attributes of a high-quality plan that can be replicated across and beyond the district. Noteworthy is the fact that the plan operates within integrated structures and processes already in place. At the heart of the plan is the use of pertinent data to identify areas of need and accelerate the implementation of the plan.The proposed teacher dashboard should enhance the personalized learning culture in the district; however, more specific details about the dashboard would have enhanced this section.

	Available	Score
(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough County Schools have set an important goal to reduce the percentage of non-proficient students by 5% of the previous year's achievement. The goals delineated in charts found in this section are lofty but attainable. These improvement goals are displayed for both the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and the Alternative Assessment (FAA). The methodology for determining growth included value-added, mean growth percentile, and change in achievement levels. Goals are specific to the listed demographic categories. These goals represent a reasonable, forward-looking approach to closing achievement gaps.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	13

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough County schools have a history of success in advancing student performance, as noted in the district's ratings. Ninety-three percent of Hillsborough high schools, 51% of middle schools, and 73% of elementary schools earned an A or B in 2011-2012. It is notable that the Hillsborough's Hispanic and African American students have experienced laudable improvements in Advanced Placement (AP) exams. For example, since 2006 the percent of Hispanic students earning a a score of 3, 4, or 5 on these exams has risen by 146%. More information could have been provided in (B.1b) to support the successes of Middleton High School.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	4

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough schools have espoused a policy of transparency by making public school and district revenues and expenditures, including personnel salaries. The State of Florida has participated in the National Center for Education Statistics Common Core Data Survey since its inception in 2006 and provides pertinent information that can be used by researchers and the general public. Hillsborough complies with Florida Statute 1010.215, which requires all districts to provide the information delineated in the statute. Thus, Hillsborough is not unique in providing this mandated information.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	9

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

On many occasions Hillsborough County School District has taken the lead in the State Department of Education's reform initiatives, especially in the area of state waivers. Most recently the district has been very involved in the development of growth models for state end-of-course exams, and the Florida Department of Education has made funds available to the district for this work and for the creation of test item banks for the development of tests in areas for which there are no state standardized exams. Other areas in which the district serves as a state leader are in its continuing to implement an ambitious seven-year plan. More information could have been provided to tie their numerous initiatives directly to personalized learning environments.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	10

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough Schools have followed an impressive plan involving myriad stakeholder groups to develop its proposal. It is obvious that significant planning had taken place prior to meeting with its designated focus groups and that the meaningful guidance and information provided by these constituents was incorporated into the proposal. The following evidence was delineated:

- evidence of engagement of the collective bargaining representation
- letters of support
- input from the parent/teacher association, the library co-op, the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System, and the Wallace Foundation, the mayors of Tampa and Plant City, and state legislators.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough County has developed a succinct but comprehensive high-quality plan for implementing PEAK. A clearly presented description of each priority district need was accompanied by a PEAK component addressing the need. Additionally, a brief analysis of FCAT data highlighted information pointing to the need to revitalize the district's middle school curriculum and instruction. The response would have been enhanced if specific plans for revitalizing middle schools had been described.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	20

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough County has a deep understanding of the keys to academic success. Its systematic and thoughtful focus on personalized learning, including student feedback and the development of an Education and Career Plan, will engender parental support and student buy-in. Students will be able to be involved in deep experiences in their areas of interest, have access to diverse cultures and perspectives to motivate their learning, facilitate their mastery of academic content and skills, and will provide each student access to personalized and skill development. A comprehensive description of Hillsborough County's plans, components, and outcomes from personalized learning were presented. Starting in the sixth grade, each student and his or her parents will collaborate with school personnel to develop an Education and Career Plan. The students will engage in self-assessments regarding their interests and learning profiles as they set their goals. This thoughtful approach will result in a truly personalized educational plan for each student.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	19

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough County views training as an integral component of its teaching and learning philosophy and its plan. Site-based professional development and team coordination will be managed by the PEAK Academic Coach, and these individuals will serve as "on-site" hubs of professional development. PEAK will introduce school-based interdisciplinary teams across the district, which will foster teamwork, sharing of ideas, and very likely a high degree of enthusiasm for PEAK and the district's Professional Learning Communities. Additionally, interaction among PEAK educators will enhance peer learning and support personalized learning, as well as informal professional development. The district has a well-structured evaluation process in place that was designed collaboratively within the district, and the district has developed a data dashboard for district personnel that will be available starting in January 2013. Both summative and formative data will be available, and the district is establishing a virtual school to be accessible to Hillsborough's educators. Through the PEAK dashboard, teachers will be able to communicate directly with students. Compensation and benefits are derived from a performance-based district compensation program that ties salary to sustained high-level performance. Teacher induction is supported through the use of full-release mentors who are assigned to every novice teacher. It is notable that Hillsborough' induction program is in place for each novice teacher for the first two years of his/her employment in the district.

It is obvious from the information above that Hillsborough values it staff highly and has made major efforts to ensure student/parents/teacher access to district resources.This section would have been further enhanced with hard data to support the district's successes in this area.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	13

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough County Schools have adopted a strategic structure whose base is supported by teams of highly qualified educators, programs, and delivery systems to provide services to all schools participating in PEAK. Various roles are described in the proposal and cross-level staff will be positioned so that PEAK as a whole fosters a culture of collaboration, efficiency, and success. For example, the Coordinator of Evaluation will manage the data aspects of the project, and a site-based Academic Coach will be assigned to each middle school to facilitate the implementation of the personalized learning model.

(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

In support of personalized learning, Hillsborough County Public Schools have ensured that parents, educators, and other stakeholders will have access to their student's data through an online student dashboard, and each middle school will be able to house and maintain a Parent Resource Center that will offer online access for families to explore student data. Academic coaches assigned to each middle school will facilitate on-line training and offer support to parents to ensure that their needs are met. Additionally, the district will provide district-level technology teachers to ensure stakeholder support. This initiative will have a very positive impact on implementing and sustaining the district's personalized learning initiatives. A sequential roll-out plan for this important multi-faceted initiative would have enhanced this laudable endeavor.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough County Public Schools have acknowledged that as PEAK is rolled out, adjustments to processes or timelines may be needed. The district plans to use its Advisory Committee to provide continuing input into the project. It is clear from the proposal text that open dialog among school officials, the Advisory Council, and stakeholders will be integral to the success of this program. Employing a continuous improvement protocol in the development and execution of this high-quality plan will help ensure that the plan is sound, remains timely, and utilizes a Plan-Do-Check action plan to lead to the plan's continuous improvement and timeliness. This is a very ambitious plan and from the beginning it is critical that each participant has a comprehensive understanding of both his/her role and duties and the overall structure of this complex program. Additional information about each mechanism for monitoring PEAK and fail-safe procedures would have enhanced this proposal.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	4

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Each school will utilize an Academic Coach who serves as a point of contact and liaison to guide constituents through PEAK. Open communication is encouraged and fostered among constituents who will navigate the complex components of PEAK. The school district strongly encourages stakeholder engagement in the project, which will be publicized in a district communication campaign. Details about communication strategies for PEAK enhanced this proposal and clarified the roles of individuals involved in PEAK. The plan has included a variety of communication links; however, fall-back tactics for weak or non-exist communications were not sufficiently addressed.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	5

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

Performance measures are pertinent, timely, attainable, and support the goals outlined throughout this proposal. Many of the measures focus on performance on the state's standardized testing program components. The text supports the increases in performance measure targets and provides a holistic profile of the district's goals and priorities.

	Available	Score
(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

Adding a Coordinator of Evaluation to the HCPS staff is critical to the successful management of the complex data elements that comprise this proposal. As noted in the proposal, a major focus for this position is to ensure the sustainability of the internal feedback mechanisms as the district becomes increasingly more dependent on the reliability of the data. Hillsborough Schools will have in place a multi-tiered plan for the district and for each school to ensure proper training of school coaches and other users.l

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough County has built into its budget what appear to be sufficient funds to support both the leadership practices that focus on the instructionally responsive use of student data and funds for the sustainability of this data-based program. The budget appears reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the proposal. Sections (b) and (c) are addressed clearly and sufficiently in the proposal to support the proposal's rationale for the expenditures. More details about other funding sources would have enhanced the proposal.

	Available	Score
(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	8

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough has allocated what appears to be sufficient funding to sustain the program goals once the grant funding has

ceased. Once the various components have been implemented, they can continue to be supported through other projects, such as the Literacy Design Collaborative project,
e-Rate at Title I schools, and funding from the Wallace Foundation, as stated in the proposal. More information about each additional funding source would have enhanced the proposal.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

Hillsborough County has proposed a comprehensive, forward-reaching, and sustainable plan to provide to its educators and parents a wealth of information to support the philosophy of data-driven instruction using private and public resources. Most elements in the criteria were addressed clearly. The district proposes to "scale-up" its plan to serve additional students and develop a plan for partnering with other appropriate Florida entities to help ensure the long-term sustainability of PEAK. Other elements in their Competitive Preference Priority will be expanded in a timely but prudent manner to ensure adequate personnel and monetary resources and to provide for any needed shifts in timelines. Private and public resources will be integrated through its implementation partners, the University of South Florida, and the Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, which is funded by the Florida Department of Education through the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services.More details regarding how the partnerships would integrate education and other services would have enhanced this proposal.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The theme of personalized learning environments permeates this proposal and is at its core. All of the elements of Absolute Prioity 1 have been sufficiently addressed in a cogent and well-thought-out manner. Listed below are some examples:

- Teachers will assume the role of instructional guides, not gatekeepers.
- The district will embrace a Response to Intervention mosdel.
- Ongoing progress monitoring will supply data to guide academic progress and interventio

	Available	Score
Total	210	187

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0466FL-2 for Hillsborough County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score

(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	5

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes Project PEAK: "Personalizing Education to Accelerate Knowledge" as its reform vision. PEAK will incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into the Response to Intervention model. The District envisions this reform actualizing through two planned components: Learning, which builds capacity for students to actively participate in a personalized learning environment, and Teaching and Leading, which builds capacity for educator effectiveness.

The applicant describes the District's current progress in addressing the following Core Educational Assurances: #3: recruiting and developing great teachers and leaders; #1: college and career readiness standards and assessments; #4: turning around lowest-achieving schools; and #2: Data Systems.

Unfortunately, the applicant's vision of reform is neither comprehensive nor compelling. The applicant's Core Educational Assurances numbering systems appear to be faulty. Additionally, the applicant provides detailed narratives about what the District has already done toward each of these assurances, but the proposal provides little in the way of reform initiatives or strategies that the District will undergo toward a "vision" which reflects the assurances. The applicant provides very little in the way of the District's vision for "Personalizing Education". The applicant identifies the Universal Design for Learning model, but provides little in the way of rationale for the selection of this model as a pillar of its reform efforts. The Response to Intervention model, proposed as a complement to UDL, is already mandated by the state. The applicant does not provide a rationale for the selection of the District's middle schools as a focus of this proposal.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	7

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a list of 46 middle schools, totally 41,788 students, who will be involved in this project. The criteria for selection appears to be the percentage of low-income students which does meet the competition's eligibility requirements. .At this point in the application, the applicant does not describe the rationale for the selection of the middle school population of students as the focal point of this grant instead of the multitude of elementary and/or high schools that are being serviced by this District.

The applicant comments that " There are 3,212 participating educators who will participate in this initiative". This number is not reported by school, nor teacher or principal "quality" (as defined in this notice).

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	6

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes that results realized in the middle schools will seamlessly flow and be replicated by the high schools, beginning with the 9th grade. This assumption is based on systems being in place: communication systems that create transparency; commitment to reform; collaborative processes to overcome resistance to cultural change; and leadership expertise. Sixth grade students who had been immersed in the process for three years will be those students entering grade 9 deeply immersed in a personalized learning culture. Project PEAK proposes to be based on a Theory of Change model with programmatic components that occur systematically, integrate progressively throughout the grant period, and reflect the capacity of current systems to support change.

The applicant proposes that the project demonstrates ingredients of a high quality plan due to the following:

1. The plan operates within integrated structures and processes already in place i.e. rigorous standards, a research-based evaluation system, policies and infrastructure that support reform
2. Areas of need identified through data-driven decision making
3. Three goals: accelerate student achievement, enhance teacher effectiveness, and ready students for college and career
4. Specified timelines and deliverables
5. Project design incorporates stakeholder input from onset and throughout implementation process
6. Two activity strands: Learning, and Teaching and Leading which organize implementation into manageable segments, monitored by a continuous improvement system that enables formative adjustment
7. A project timeline which allows for changes to occur to enable resource management and stabilization of reform
8. Technical assistance is supported with external and internal expertise.

Thus far the applicant's narratives provide inadequate evidence to support claims of "high quality".

- There has been no evidence to support the manner by which areas of need were identified, nor the means by which

- stakeholders input molded the project design.
- The chart included in Appendix 5 is poorly designed. It does identify goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties., but these categories provide more confusion than clarification.. Certain activities are identified to occur during years 1 through 4. Others occur during years 5-8 (for purposes of scale-up activities in years 5-8, this is clear). The Activities are generic and the Deliverables refer more to evidences (Ex. Sign in sheets) than products.
- The manageable segments used to describe Learning and Teaching and Leading require definition..
- Resource management and stabilization of resources require definition
- Internal and eternal Technical assistance requires definition.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	6

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The project's goals identified in Appendix 5 include: 1. Enhance educator effectiveness; 2.Accelerate student achievement: 3. Ready students for college and careers. The applicant's vision for improved learning and performance and increased equity between and among subgroups of students cannot adequately be measured based on the project's goals submitted by the applicant.

Charts for Reading (grades 3-10),   Mathematics (grades 3-8 and HS), Science (grades 5-8 and HS), and Writing (grades 4-8, & 10), representing the State's ESEA targets and actual District proficiency scores in those subjects at those grade levels were included in the proposal. Charts depicting decreases in achievement gaps between the State ESEA targets and District scores were also included. The applicant's set targets for all student performance measures, achievement gap measures, graduation rates, and college enrollment rates for all subgroups demonstrate an annual reduction in the percentage of non-proficient students by 5% of the previous year's achievement, which appears to be very conservative. Recorded calculations depicting a decrease of 5% annually in achievement gaps for student populations in Reading, Mathematics and College Enrollment appear to be in error.

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B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	14

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated evidence of a clear record of success in advancing student learning in Math, in increasing graduation rates and in increasing college enrollment rates. The District earned three consecutive "A" grades on the State's Report Card (from 2007-2008 to 2009-2010). In 2010-2011 93% of the District's high schools, 73% of elementary schools, received an "A" or "B" and 51% of middle schools received that designation. These percentages declined due to numerous changes in the State's accountability system during the 2011-2012 school year.

The College Board recognized the District in 2011 for having the largest annual increase in AP exam passing rates of any district in the nation. Minority students demonstrated dramatic increases in AP passing rates. The District has realized an increase in their graduation rates from 2007-2008 through 2010-2011(63.9% to 69.3%). HCPS has also experienced rising levels of graduates enrolling in college (54% to 58% in reported years from 2007-08).

The applicant claims that 2011-2012 academic data reports and School Report grades were not available, athough 2011-2012 scores are reported further into the proposal. Scores for Reading have declined over the past four years.

The District has implemented reform models in its lowest achieving schools. Middleton HS was required to institute the transformation model and has realized significant progress and has been exited from the State's "Intervene" category. Sligh MS has recently been categorized as a "Priority" school by the state. The District is looking at lessons learned with its experiences at Middleton in order to realize changes at Sligh.

The District has recently begun work on redesigning their performance management system by developing new district and school level scorecards that track progress against the District's primary objectives. Additionally, data "dashboards" will be developed to supply real-time information on both teacher and student performance. Performance results will be reported along with attendance, discipline, on-track indicators, and student demographic information. The "dashboard's" student performance information will be made available to students, parents and educators as a one access point of reference for test

scores, progress reports, report cards and grades.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	3

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated evidence of the public accessibility to the District and school-level expenditures for K-12 instruction and non-personnel instruction. As a part of the district reporting to the Civil Rights Data Collection system, data including annual personnel salaries at the school level for instructional and non-instructional support staff are reported. In addition, this information is annually reported to the State in its required Florida Department of Education's Transparency Report.

Actual personnel salaries at the school level for all school-level instructional and support staff are not published.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	10

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant has demonstrated evidence that the District has led reform efforts in the state resulting in state waivers granting the District with sufficient autonomy to proceed with reforms that have the potential to serve as state-wide models, such as personalized learning environments. These include, but are not limited to:

- New teacher and principal evaluation systems
- The development of the model of accountability factors informing Florida's student growth measures
- Local instructional improvement systems
- Common Core Standards implementation
- Rigorous implementation of accelerated courses, including STEM
- International Baccalaureate program requirements for high schools
- Protocol Standards for Professional Development
- Advisement of students of acceleration courses
- Initiating transition to next generation computer-based tests for FCAT and others.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	2

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant failed to adequately demonstrate evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of this proposal. Considering that Hillsborough County Public Schools serves over 193,000 students in K-12 and 41,788 students in 46 middle schools, only 9 principals,4 guidance counselors, 7 teachers, 7 students and 5 parents participated in focus group discussions on September 10, 2012. (Appendix 15) The number of invitations issued is unknown, as is the criteria established for invitees.

Upon review of the few participant responses, it is unclear whether or not the participants were fully aware of the intent of the discussions. No mention of the RTT-D grant proposal , nor required assurances were recorded. There was no evidence of subsequent public meetings, presentations, nor announcements regarding this proposal included in the application.

There was no evidence of middle-school teachers', nor middle school principals' buy-in. No Memoranda of Understanding nor Letters of Support from participating principals were included in this proposal. The application was signed by the President of the Local Teacher's Union and School Board President. Seventeen Letters of Support from various public entities were included.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	2

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant fails to adequately present a high-quality plan for implementing personalized learning environments in the middle school. The applicant uses the term "Personalized Learning Environment", but an operational definition for the term has not been provided. In the traditional sense, "Personalized Learning" refers to remediation or, as for special education students, IEPs. The applicant infrequently mentions acceleration options, but neither remediation nor acceleration are explored fully.

Only four District Needs are identified, with no description provided as to the means by which these needs were prioritized. According to the application's narrative, the middle schools were selected as an area of focus for this grant primarily because of the middle school's disappointing achievement scores in Reading.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides an approach to learning that engages learners through a restructured environment which includes resources, tools, activities, and feedback as a means of empowering and engaging students in the learning process. Based on the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework, research-based principles illuminate the need for personalization and equity in the classroom. The framework focuses on ensuring that students become masters of content knowledge as well as managers of their own learning experiences. However, the applicant provides only a rudimentary description of UDL and thereby fails to adequately describe how UDL provides personalization and equity for all students.

Beginning in the 6th grade, students, together with parents and school personnel, will develop an Education and Career Plan (ECP). Based on self-assessments, learning inventories, current achievement, discipline and attendance records, the Plan will assist in establishing learning goals designed to make students college and career ready. Based on interest surveys, students will be afforded the opportunity to enroll in enrichment courses of their choosing. Students will share an interdisciplinary team of teachers who will meet regularly, and provide flexible groupings in content areas. This concept combined with RtI interventions will ensure that all students receive equitable access to high-quality instruction, and specialized interventions for more significant needs within personalized learning environments. This setting will provide an environment where the students are able to master critical academic content and develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving in a threat-free atmosphere.

Multiple opportunities to demonstrate mastery of coursework will be afforded through technology such as Literacy Design Collaborative modules, and College Board math and language arts curricula. The student dashboard will enable students to gauge career and college readiness and chart their progress toward graduation as they continue to receive formative feedback regarding their attainment of necessary credits and graduation requirements. The dashboard will allow for ongoing feedback and will become an essential tool for the teachers, students and family in that it will provide access to all formative and summative assessment results, the student's ECP, an electronic portfolio, and a social media tab. The dashboard systems will be designed to provide high-needs students, including Exceptional Students and English Language Learners, specific accommodations and prescriptive strategies for ensuring that they have equitable access to academic content and the opportunities to successfully master content. Access will be available through any computer utilizing a unique username and password. Training in the use of the dashboard will be provided to students through their interdisciplinary teams. Parents will be trained through developed Parent Resource Centers.

Being a District of over 194,000 students, cultural diversity is evident district-wide, and students supposedly encounter learning environments infused with rich, cultural diversity. Yet, the applicant does not provide the ethnic composition of the District, nor its percentage of ELL students. The applicant states that program participants will receive cultural competency training, yet, with the diversity that currently exists, extensive training should already be commonplace.

	Available	Score
(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	16

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a description of the UDL framework as an approach to teaching and leading that helps educators to improve instruction and increase their capacity to support student progress toward meeting college- and career-ready standards or college- and career-ready graduation requirements. Throughout the project, district level supervisors, administration, teachers, peer evaluators and academic coaches will receive extensive training to learn and replicate the principles and instructional approaches associated with personalizing learning using the UDL framework. Academic coaches will be the hub of professional development at the sites – coordinating PLCs, scheduling professional development, and providing job-embedded support as teachers transition to personalized instruction.

In addition to professional development in support of UDL and Response to Intervention, flexible grouping will be an area for

discussion. Flexible grouping will allow for frequent schedule alterations to meet personal intervention, acceleration or interest-driven learning needs of students.

Educators will measure student progress toward meeting college-and career readiness requirements through the use of formative assessments administered every four to six weeks. Data from digital learning tools that provide ongoing performance feedback will inform instructional practice. PLC teams will be interdisciplinary and will focus on individual data, and grade level trends across teams. Through online learning communities, administrators and teachers will share program and school and grade level data across middle schools to inform collective practice.

Both administrators and teachers have highly visible evaluation components that are designed to inform effective teaching and leadership through frequency of observation and feedback. Formal observations are followed by conferences with teachers having electronic access to observation feedback. All observation data is tracked with professional development being advised in response to evaluation data. This current evaluation system provides data that informs human capital management decisions such as hiring, transfer, and promotions.

A data dashboard will be launched in January 2013 providing a portal for administration, teachers and district personnel to access student data as well as school-wide, or grade level and district level data. A District Technology Specialist will supervise the building and maintenance of the technology infrastructure, be responsible for troubleshooting technology issues, and oversee the trainings which will be designed for staff, students and their families.

In order to increase the number of effective and highly effective teachers and leaders, the District has begun to examine teacher preparation programs to inform recruitment and hiring practices. Mentors are assigned to novice instructors. Additionally, data gathered from the evaluation components become a part of a targeted selection process that dictates whom to interview and whom to hire.

The applicant does include UDL, flexible grouping and Response to Intervention training as components of professional development. Equally important for consideration should be the individual's role in Professional Learning Communities, interdisciplinary teaming, and data analysis. Since the application provides insufficient evidence as to teacher-buy in of this proposal, professional development focusing on "change" and "professionalism" may be critical to the success of this proposal.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	12

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides comprehensive details of the District's organizational structure, which, considering the immense size of the District, appears to be a workable and efficient system. The Leadership Teams described in the application are empowered to make decisions regarding student progress and interventions. Principals do the hiring, budgets, scheduling, and are responsible for leadership selection. School Advisory Councils, consisting of teachers, parents, and community leaders appear to be limited ibeing allowed to give input to the principal only in areas such as school budgets.

Students will be given the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not the amount of time spent on a topic through Academically Challenging Curriculum to Enhance Learning, a law stipulating provisions in public education that provides acceleration options for students. If a student attains a passing score on a statewide, standardized end-of-course exam, the student is awarded credit even if the student was not enrolled in a course. Other opportunities to progress include using a variety of technologies, digital platforms, blended learning environments, and co-enrollment opportunities.

The RtI model includes treatments that provide learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities, ELL's and Gifted students. UDL strategies and differentiated learning strategies will provide practical ways to acknowledge each student's learning style, interests, goals and challenges.

Much of the responses included in the narratives for middle schools students are future endeavors, contingent upon funding either from this grant or other funding sources. In order for these programmatic opportunities to be successful, the District will need to establish policy and procedures to ensure optimal implementation.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	8

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The District's infrastructure, specifically the student dashboard, will support personalized learning by assisting parents, educators and other key stakeholders access to student achievement data and other pertinent programmatic information. To assist lower income families, Parent Resource Centers will be equipped with computers for access to these databases, and middle schools' computer labs, the city's computer lab outreach or any device with an internet connection will provide access. Information Services will collaborate with internal and external stakeholders to create specifications for the dashboard initiative. In order to fully appreciate the capacity of the District's databases, parents and stakeholders should be afforded training in not only accessing information, but also in interpreting what they access, so that they are comfortable in actively participating in their student's learning.

The District will solicit vendors to build the student system to be compatible with the District's existing data warehouse system. The current District system includes a Human Resources component, a management system which supports financial, procurement and project management processes and a Student Information System, which stores, enrollment, attendance, and scheduling. At the teacher level, a teacher dashboard will provide information regarding student performance by subgroup. .

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	**15**	**7**

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant proposes a strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process through a Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle. Data retrieval and analysis will result in weekly, quarterly and semi-annual forums for stakeholders to engage in meaningful data chats which may lead to course corrections at the District and site levels. To engage key stakeholders, an Advisory Council will be instituted during project planning, and be composed of project personnel, district personnel, educators, parents, students and community members to continually provide input into the project, meet at least quarterly with project personnel and modify the program as necessary. Meetings will be voluntary and advertised throughout the District. The District will strive to maintain a transparent cycle of improvement and will include members of the teachers' union to ensure educators' input.

The applicant failed to adequately demonstrate evidence of meaningful stakeholder engagement in the development of this proposal. Considering that Hillsborough County Public Schools serves over 193,000 students in K-12 and 41,788 students in 46 middle schools, only 9 principals,4 guidance counselors, 7 teachers, 7 students and 5 parents participated in focus group discussions on September 10, 2012. (Appendix 15) If the District was unable to engage stakeholders in the planning stages of this proposal, the applicant's discussion regarding the intensive hands-on participation of stakeholders in the continuous improvement process is unrealistic and unfortunately unlikely.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	**5**	**2**

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Each schol site will utilize an Academic Coach who will serve as a point of contact for educators, parents and students in order to field quetons regarding PEAK. In order to communicate progress and publicly share information, a quarterly e-newsletter will be accessible to all families via school web sites and dashboards. Each school's School Improvement Team will be kept abreast of project developments and reform initiatives. School Improvement Plans will include project developments and be monitored monthly as currently required. Teachers and administrators will have access to the teacher dashboard. Students and parents will be given the email address for the PEAK suggestion box/helpline which will give them an opportunity for providig feedback.

The applicant states that "HCPS' teachers, administrators, district personnel, HCTA representatives, students, parents and community members worked collaboratively to craft a plan which provides a thoughful approach for guiding stakeholder engagement in the project. The district will continue to operate based on the philosophy that the more informed stakeholders become the more engaged in the process they will be.." The reality is that an exceedingly small number of stakeholders participated in the planning of this proposal as demonstrated by a sign-in sheet and a single agenda dated September 10, 2012. (Exhibit 15). Additionally, considering the size of the district, only seventeen letters of support were included as evidence.

The applicant fails to adequately describe strategies for ongoing communication and engagement of stakeholders who may fall within the District's poverty rate of over 50%, and the cultural diversity (and English as a Second Language) reported in this proposal.

(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	3

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant included a table identifying performance measures for 9 student populations. The increase in student proficiency (or decrease in non-proficient students) of 5% in each academic area as demonstrated by state assessments, appear to be very conservative. A rationale for choosing these measures was not included. Socio-economic performance measures included Economically Disadvantaged students.

Charts depicting percentages of "highly effective" and "effective" teachers and principals combine the two positions making it difficult to discern actual percentages per position for the years listed. Listing teachers and principals in separate categories would be preferred. An annual increase of 2% in the percentage of "highly effective" and "effective" teachers and principals is also very conservative in light of the fact that the District employs a rigorous evaluation system.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	2

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant submitted formal and informal evaluation activities which will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of grant-funded activities. A Coordinator of Evaluation will be hired to oversee these activities, build internal evaluation capacity and provide continuous feedback to program staff . Qualitative data collected from students, parents, and middle school educators will be combined with quantitative data from data systems to provide formative feedback to the Project Director. A summative program evaluation report will be completed and disseminated.

The applicant fails to neither adequately describe the manner by which evaluation data will be collected; nor the manner by which formative evaluations will lead to program modifications.

The chart included in Appendix 5 is poorly designed. It does identify goals, activities, timelines, deliverables and responsible parties. Certain activities are identified to occur during years 1 through 4. Others occur during years 5-8 (for purposes of scale-up activities in years 5-8, this is clear). The Activities are generic, and the Deliverables refer more to evidences (Ex. Sign in sheets) than products. Activities that are listed to occur in years 5-8 (post grant funding) are more likely to occur in years 1-4.

The Deliverables do not evaluate the "effectiveness" of funded activities. The Deliverables listed in this proposal refer to evidences (Ex. Sign in sheets) and are not qualitative.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	6

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provided a budget and supporting narratives as required by the application process. Budget items were identified as one-time investments vs. ongoing operational costs. The federal cost breakdown per pupil was calculated at $957. Other funding totaled $14.7 million. Total per pupil cost was $1,310.

The following budget entries are being questionned by this reviewer:

- The applicant submitted a list of 46 middle schools which would be involved in this project. These schools will house PEAK Learning Centers. Peak Academies, which were not listed as participants in this proposal, surfaced briefly within the narrative as "eight regional school sites will host a PEAK Academy". Several budget entries are made for Peak Academies: teachers (32 positions totaling $4,960,000); fringe benefits ($1,476,592) furniture ($15,000); computer hardware ($279,568) ; equipment ($16,352); software ($80,000); supplies (($24,000). The applicant is requesting $6,851,512 to support PEAK Academies. Since these academies were not listed as participants in this proposal, inclusion of these excessive expenditures for these schools is unreasonable.

- The applicant describes the frequent data reviews and hands-on student progress discussions that are to be conducted by teachers via Professional Learning Communities. It might be assumed by the narratives that several interdisciplinary teachers at each of the 46 middle schools would conduct these reviews during the course of the school day; perhaps

during their interdisciplinary plan time. Yet, the narratives are misleading in that funding is being requested for 45 teachers @1 hr. per month x $15 per hour. This budgeted amount clearly indicates that student data reviews will be conducted very infrequently, and when they do occur once per month, these reviews will be conducted beyond the contractual day.

- Forty-five teachers at 46 sites are being scheduled for 42 hours of professional development (during their own time) primarily in years 2 and 3. Since these paid sessions are after (or before) the contractual day, attendance cannot be mandatory, as was inferred by the proposal.

- The cost to add custodial staff (plus benefits) to clean up after parent training sessions and council/focus meetings is confusing, since these activities are most likely conducted on already staffed school campuses or district facilities. The number of part-time/ full time positions is not specified. No hourly rate is identified

- A Cultural Competence Consultant @ $80,000 for a 3 year contract is unreasonable. The applicant describes the robust current cultural diversity celebrated within the district, and the narratives do not describe a need for this position to support the successful implementation of this grant.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	**10**	**8**

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant provides a reasonable plan for sustainability of the project's goals after the term of the grant. Foundational capacity includes district funding commitments of approximately $14.7 million. The realignment and retooling of school site roles, expectations, and staffing structures, rather than the addition of more staff, will reshape human capital resources at the school sites to support personalization practices.

Plans to scale-up the initiative to the 9-12 grade levels at the conclusion of the grant period is a means of expanding the systemic integration of personalization. With the newly funded data infrastructure, professional development, reorganization of school-based personnel roles, successful expansion of the program to include grades 9-12, is likely.

A budget, with entries proposed for years beyond the funding cycle, would be helpful in supporting the sustainability proposed in the criterion.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	**10**	**8**

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The project focuses not only on academic achievement, but also on the social, emotional, and behavioral needs of the participating students. The behavioral side of the RtI consists of procedures and processes that support behavior intended for all students across all settings. PEAK provides a school-community continuum of interconnected intervention systems through the implementation of School Wide Positive Behavior Support within the RtI structure. PEAK's partner in this project will be the University of South Florida, Louis de la Parte Florida Mental Health Institute, funded by the Florida Department of Education.

The applicant has included a listing of behaviorally related goals relating to decreases in school disciplinary referrals and disciplinary infractions. Extensive data will be used to inform appropriate student placement and academic services. School personnel, in collaboration with parents can create appropriate interventions that will directly address concerns. A school-based social services team can assess data and can provide additional assessments to develop intensive, personalized interventions. A chart depicting Performance Measures (Ex. Suspensions), Applicable Populations, Student Subgroups,

Baseline and Target dates graphically represent the anticipated outcomes.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	**Met/Not Met**	**Met**

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes Project PEAK: "Personalizing Education to Accelerate Knowledge" as its reform vision. PEAK will incorporate Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into the Response to Intervention model. The District envisions this reform actualizing through two planned components: Learning, which builds capacity for students to actively participate in a personalized learning environment, and Teaching and Leading, which builds capacity for educator effectiveness.

The applicant describes the District's current progress in addressing the following Core Educational Assurances: #3: recruiting and developing great teachers and leaders; #1: college and career readiness standards and assessments; #4: turning around lowest-achieving schools; and #2: Data Systems.

Total	210	143

Race to the Top - District

Technical Review Form

Application #0466FL-3 for Hillsborough County Public Schools

A. Vision (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(A)(1) Articulating a comprehensive and coherent reform vision (10 points)	10	10

(A)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative successfully establishes the district's vision for the reform proposal (all students will graduate not only academically ready for post-secondary enrollment but also confident in their ability to succeed), which will be manifest in the PEAK project (Personalizing Education to Accelerate Knowledge). The narrative describes how the PEAK project will use Universal Design to move the teacher from keeper of knowledge to facilitator of knowledge with three basic principles -- multiple means of representation, expression, and engagement – to individualize learning in the Response to Intervention framework for both academics and behavior. A particular strength of the vision is for students to actively participate in the RTI process, enabling them to become increasingly responsive to their data, to develop academic self-efficacy, and to grow increasingly confident in their ability to engage in academic rigor. The narrative further details the plan as consisting of two components: 1) active student participation in the learning environment and 2) teaching and leading building capacity for educator effectiveness. Each of these components consists of appropriate and specific strategies to achieve the district's reform goals.

Beyond the reform vision, the narrative details, as a key marker for the district's readiness to implement the reform, its six-years' focus on recruiting and developing exemplary teachers through its performance-based compensation system, employing the Empowering Effective Teachers reform in partnership with the Bill &Melinda Gates Foundation, and its reformed educator

evaluation process that incorporates student performance data.

Further evidence of the district's readiness presented in the narrative, particularly for the target population of middle schools, is its implementation of the EXCELerator model and the award-winning work the district has done with the AVID program, increasing the number of students, particularly from underserved populations, successfully preparing for AP classes.

The narrative successfully presents the district's vision and also details the groundwork done in the four core assurance areas to prepare it for successful implementation of that vision.

(A)(2) Applicant's approach to implementation (10 points)	10	9

(A)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Based on its analysis of the data and the myriad challenges faced by the age group, the applicant provides adequate rationale for why it has selected all district middle schools to participate in its reform plan and provides evidence that these schools collectively meet the competition's eligibility requirements. The discussion of the "challenges that manifest in stagnating achievement" at this grade level lacking specificity.

The application provides the requested list of participating schools completed with the required numbers breakdown of students and teachers.

(A)(3) LEA-wide reform & change (10 points)	10	10

(A)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative provides a very clear, coherent, and detailed plan for both why and how the reform agenda can and will be scaled up into the high school level after the close of the grant period.

The articulation of the reasons for readiness for implementation and scale-up include eight appropriate elements: the preparation work already completed in the areas of standards, educator evaluation, and reform policies; the fact that the reform was based entirely on data analysis; the focus on measurable goals throughout the process; the attention paid to timelines and deliverables to monitor progress; the fact that stakeholder input figured large in the development of the proposal; a tight organization of the segments of reform; plans for resource management and stabilization of the reform; and the attention paid to the need for technical assistance.

(A)(4) LEA-wide goals for improved student outcomes (10 points)	10	8

(A)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The rationale behind the selection of performance targets is logical, reasonable, and designed to reduce the achievement gap in an achievable time period. The goal of an improvement of 5% of the percent not proficient from the previous year is reasonable for overall improvement, but not entirely ambitious given the amount of improvement necessary in the lowest-achieving subgroups. This assessment holds for the targets on graduation rates and college enrollment as well, though the logic is consistent.

B. Prior Record of Success and Conditions for Reform (45 total points)

	Available	Score
(B)(1) Demonstrating a clear track record of success (15 points)	15	11

(B)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative provides evidence of some significant progress in advancing student learning and achievement and increasing equity in student learning. The narrative provides information about the state's grading system for districts and schools, noting that the district received A grades in three of the last four years, slipping to B this past year with the increase in state expectations. One element of the various changes described at the state level is that this past year was the first that

required performance measures for special education students and English Language Learners. This is certainly a positive, and surprisingly late, addition to ensure equity for all students. A weakness of the application narrative is that it doesn't provide raw student data on the state assessment as evidence of its improvements within the overall state grade.

Where clear evidence of success in closing the achievement gap is provided in the application is in the area of AP score attainment where significant gains have been made across the board and, in particular, in traditionally underserved populations. Evidence is also provided of steady gains in the area of graduation rates and a slow but steady increase in college enrollments.

In terms of demonstrating a track record of success in reforming struggling schools, the narrative provides strong evidence of significant change at one middle school. It is not clear from the narrative if other schools in the district did or did not achieve similar improvement (or even were in need of) reform.

The narrative describes how, through the Empowering Effective Teachers initiative, the district is working to make student data of various types and teacher effectiveness data more available through a dashboard. The narrative also describes the district's plans to create student dashboards to make data available to students and parents. A strength of this planned system is that it will also provide direct links for families to related information like online curriculum, educational Web sites, and career interest inventories.

(B)(2) Increasing transparency in LEA processes, practices, and investments (5 points)	5	5

(B)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative describes the very high level of transparency in the district's reporting of school-level revenues and expenditures, to include salary information. Information is reported to the Civil Rights Data Collection system annually. In addition, the narrative notes that state law requires annual reporting of this information, which the district then actively shares with parents and advisory groups. The application provides evidence of this report.

(B)(3) State context for implementation (10 points)	10	6

(B)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative thoroughly describes how the district has historically, and not infrequently, taken a leadership position with the state department of education in advocating for and winning necessary reforms to enable district autonomy in advancing personalized learning environments. The narrative also details relevant state laws and regulations requiring school-based reforms that are in alignment with RTTT-D goals, creating positive conditions for successful implementation of reform.

The narrative states that sufficient autonomy exits for successful implementation of personalized learning reforms, but it does not detail the nature or source of that autonomy.

(B)(4) Stakeholder engagement and support (10 points)	10	8

(B)(4) Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative details the process employed by the district to seek input and generate support for the report proposal through direct engagement of stakeholders. The process began with high-level central administration and moved down through the middle school sites to include educators (principals, teachers, and counselors), parents, and students. The narrative provides significant examples of major shits in the reform proposal design based on the feedback received from these stakeholder groups. A weakness is the insufficient direct involvement of participating educators.

The narrative describes strong support from and involvement of bargaining unit leadership in particular and membership in addition not only in the design and implementation of this reform but in ongoing efforts for positive reform in the district.

The application provides ample letters of support from such organizations as the teacher's bargaining unit, parent organizations, institutions of higher learning, foundations, and business organizations.

(B)(5) Analysis of needs and gaps (5 points)	5	4

(B)(5) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative provides evidence that it has engaged in a process and has a high-quality plan based on an already-completed gap analysis of its data-determined needs. The nature of that gap analysis process and the stakeholders involved are not discussed in the narrative.

The plan builds on existing infrastructure and data-based initiatives, but is focused on the needs of middle school students. It has clear goals, activities, timelines, deliverables, and responsible parties.

C. Preparing Students for College and Careers (40 total points)

	Available	Score
(C)(1) Learning (20 points)	20	16

(C)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The application narrative successfully presents the district's high quality plan for improving learning and teaching by personalizing the learning environment. The narrative states and supports by action the district's belief that the strength and preparation of the teacher is the key to ensuring that students graduate college and career ready.

The narrative describes and supports how the framework for the plan focuses not only on student mastery of learning but on students becoming masters and managers of their own learning and goal-setting through utilizing the Understanding by Design framework. One strategy and aligned activity to achieve this is the individualized Education and Career Plan that every student completes in 6th grade in collaboration with parents and educators, the creation of which is informed by data and is designed to focus students on the goal of graduating college and career ready. The narrative gives insufficient attention to explaining how this approach to learning will engage and empower high needs students in particular.

The narrative describes how students will identify and pursue learning and development opportunities through the PEAK Learning Centers which will offer support as well as enrichment based on student needs and interest surveys. One goal described is for students to be able to demonstrate mastery via required assessments and be able to move on to high school level courses for high school credit, which is designed to provide opportunities for deep learning experiences.

Recognizing the rich diversity of this very large school system, the district's reform proposal promises training for educators in cultural competency intended to be reflected in their personalized lesson design with students. The district appropriately recognizes this training need in order to ensure truly needs-based and personalized learning experiences for students. The narrative also notes that the very nature of on-line tools opens a wealth of opportunities for enrichment and diversity in this international society of ours.

The application narrative discusses the district's plans to ensure that students master critical skills while ensuring personalization through flexible grouping of students in interdisciplinary teams. The narrative describes the possibility of students moving among different teachers based on formative assessment data throughout the course of the year. It is not clear from the narrative what sort of cost-benefit analysis or research the district has done on this model that may not allow for a teacher truly to develop a relationship with each of his students but does provide more targeted instruction and opportunities for mastery.

The narrative states that the district will provide opportunities for students to develop skills and traits such as goal-setting, teamwork, perseverance, critical thinking, communication, creativity, and problem-solving, but the narrative provides insufficient discussion of how this will occur.

The application narrative adequately explains how the district's combined implementation of the UDL and RTI frameworks will ensure a personalized sequence of instructional content and skills development designed to enable the student to achieve his or her individual learning goals, meeting the student where he is academically and behaviorally and providing all the supports necessary to move him as far as he can go.

The applicant's plan to provide a variety of high-quality instructional approaches and environments based on individual interest and needs is extremely thorough and cohesive, using a structured yet fluid tiered approach for both intervention and enrichment.

The narrative details how content, including digital learning content aligned with college and career ready standards, will be available to students in myriad forms that they can access to meet their individual interest and learning style and needs. A

particular strength of the design is that is allows for students to move fluidly among tiers based on data.

Ongoing and regular feedback including frequently updated individual student data that can be used to determine progress toward mastery of standards is the purpose of the student dashboard accessible to students and parents to guide the monitoring of progress and decision-making. In addition to data, this dashboard will contain personalized resources, electronic portfolio, and a secure social media tab to allow for communication to complete learning expeditions. The described ability of the system to provide not only resources but also ongoing and frequent feedback on progress is strong.

The narrative states that appropriate accommodations and strategies for high-need students will be available on the dashboard, but the discussion of these accommodations is cursory at best.

The "wheel" course for all sixth grade students is designed to provide them with training and support on the various tools available to them to individualize their instructional program. Differentiated training for parents is also planned as part of the PEAK program as stated in the narrative.

(C)(2) Teaching and Leading (20 points)	20	15

(C)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The second of the major components of the applicant's reform proposal is focused on teaching and leading, and the narrative describes a focused plan with coordinated goals, activities, and deliverables. The plan describes an approach of strategically sequencing educator training and structuring team support toward full implementation. The primary focus of the educator training is on how to personalize instruction in a meaningful way using Universal Design for Learning and how best to utilize flexible grouping. The strategic support of an Academic Coach at each site bodes well for the success of the reform as training can be job-embedded and continuously supported through the professional learning communities these coaches will also facilitate. The district's plan, as described in the narrative, to use the vehicle of these interdisciplinary PLC's as the primary structure for training and collaboration around data and its most effective use is strong. As described in the narrative, the OpenIDEAS Platform (an online teacher community) is an innovative solution that will enable educators to share ideas and extend their learning across the district. A structure within the project design that is a particular strength leading toward continuous improvement is the Problem Solving Leadership Team, comprised of key leaders and teachers.

As the narrative describes, not only will teachers frequently measure student progress toward meeting college and career ready standards and use data to inform both the acceleration of student progress, but also, the Problem Solving Leadership Team will review data every two weeks to monitor progress and inform the collective practice of educators. Over time, this leadership group will also examine data to determine the effectiveness of specific implementation. The plan for the frequency of data review is ambitious, yet appropriate.

The applicant's thinking around the purpose of the evaluation system as demonstrated in the application narrative is extremely supportive of the reform project's goals. The applicant clearly understand the role of a meaningful evaluation system where the process is inclusive and the feedback is designed around continuous improvement, for both the individual and the collective, both of professional development and of professional practice.

The narrative thoroughly describes the increased access educators, parents, and students will have to data and learning resources via the dashboards. However, the duties and responsibilities assigned to the single new District Resource Teacher for the Virtual School seem excessive for one individual given the size of the district and the number of students, teachers, and schools involved. The narrative is not convincing that this level of support will be sufficient for successful implementation of this element of the reform proposal. Of even more concern is the plan to hire a single District Technology Specialist to supervise the technology infrastructure work to implement PEAK and scale-up the technology influx to this very large district.

Consistently and throughout, the narrative describes how participating educators will be provided training on how to use tools, data, and resources to accelerate all students' progress toward meeting college and career ready graduation requirements. As described in the narrative, the district plans for ample resources to be able to target specific student needs. The narrative is very strong as it relates to providing resources for the majority of students to accelerate their learning and meet their individual needs; it is less strong and specific in its discussion of meeting the needs of the high-needs population.

The narrative describes a robust evaluation system tied to compensation that focuses on educator effectiveness. The principal evaluation system also includes requirements around core competencies in the areas of Culture for Learning and Professional Behavior and High Standards for Student Learning. The narrative provides insufficient information about how information from this robust system is used to inform the development of training, tools, and resources to increase educator effectiveness and improve student outcomes besides stating it will be so.

The district's plan for increasing the number of students who receive instruction from effective and highly effective educators focuses on training for all teachers within the goals of the reform proposal, full-release mentors for novice teachers, and

working closely with the most effective teacher preparation institutions as determined by effectiveness data. The discussion of differentiation of training based on data from evaluations is cursory, and there is no discussion of specific strategies to meet the needs of high-needs schools and hard-to-staff subject areas. The narrative does discuss its use of effectiveness data to "drive exit options" for educators who are not effective.

D. LEA Policy and Infrastructure (25 total points)

	Available	Score
(D)(1) LEA practices, policies, rules (15 points)	15	11

(D)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative describes how additions to the central office support structure will fold into the existing organizational structure of the district. Central office level support seems ample. It is not clear from the narrative how use of this existing primary structure will be leveraged to ensure collaboration, communication, and accountability to provide support and services to participating schools as the reform proposal is implemented. It is not clear from the narrative and graphic whether the site-based Academic Coach reports to the principal or to the General Director of Middle Schools. Also from the organizational structure graphic, it is not clear how the PEAK Project Director interacts with the Middle School Director in terms of project responsibilities and oversight.

The narrative describes the level of autonomy afforded the building principal and the site-based Problem Solving Leadership Team. The level of autonomy and flexibility described is modest (related mostly to the scheduling of meetings and the assigning of roles within the building) but is sufficient to ensure the implementation of the reform proposal to personalize learning.

The environment in the state and district for giving students the opportunity to progress and earn credit based on demonstrated mastery, not on seat-time, is strong. State law relating to Acceleration Options in Public Education requires whole-grade and mid-year promotion, subject-matter acceleration, virtual instruction in higher grade-level subjects, and a Credit Acceleration Program. The law calls for the allowance of other enrichments as well which the district's reform proposal incorporates. The Academic Coaches will work alongside classroom teachers to ensure that students accelerate seamlessly through their learning pathways.

The narrative is thorough throughout the application in describing the myriad ways in which students will have the opportunity to demonstrate mastery of standards and accelerate unfettered through the system.

In terms of providing learning resources and instructional practices that are adaptable and fully accessible to all students, including students with disabilities and English Language Learners, the narrative provides statements that ELL and SPED experts will provide support, presumably in the manner in which they currently do and which the law requires. No additional innovation, support, or strategy is provided in this area. As the narrative notes, however, both UDL and RTI are designed specifically to meet the individual needs of all students.

	Available	Score
(D)(2) LEA and school infrastructure (10 points)	10	7

(D)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative details the district's attempt to ensure that students and families have access to the plethora of information, resources, and tools on the student dashboard outside school hours. Each school will house a Parent Resource Center with computers that will enable families to access student data. Other community computer labs are described. The narrative focuses on family access to data and does not provide any additional discussion of low-income student access to the online digital resources outside school time.

The narrative describes the trainings and technical supports that will be provided to parents. These take the form of trainings through the PTA, differentiated support via the site-based Academic Coaches, and additional support from the site-based technology support teacher. Other sections of the narrative thoroughly describe trainings and support that will be available to teachers. The level of additional technical support provided to support the reform proposal in the form of a single district level technology support person is concerning given the level of increased reliance on technology in this very large district. It is understood that there are site-based technology support teachers and Academic Coaches to provide assistance in this area as well.

The application narrative commits to using information technology systems that allow parents and students to export their information in an open data format and to use the data in other electronic learning systems. This element will be required in the contract with the vendor to create the system. The applicant successfully meets this criterion.

The narrative provides a decidedly thorough description of how the applicant will ensure that districts and schools use interoperable data systems.

E. Continuous Improvement (30 total points)

	Available	Score
(E)(1) Continuous improvement process (15 points)	15	11

(E)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes as its strategy for implementing a rigorous continuous improvement process to ensure ongoing monitoring and revisions resulting in goal attainment and overall project success the Plan-Do-Check-Act cycle.

The plan calls for numerous structured discussions as part of the continuous improvement process including weekly, quarterly, and annual data chats with multiple stakeholders. It is not clear from the narrative if the weekly data chats are with different groups of stakeholders each week or with the same groups. Weekly meetings seem excessive if with the same stakeholder group as they are unlikely to see actionable change in a single week's data. A critical role in the continuous improvement cycle is filled by the site-based Academic Coach who will provide regular feedback to project staff in order to guide project improvement. These coaches will also distribute quarterly "pulse checks" back to their site staff from the project leadership staff, which will form the basis of guided questions differentiated by staff roles. The described structure of the continuous improvement structure is coherent and inclusive.

The narrative describes how the district will publicly share information on project progress through a quarterly newsletter crafted collaboratively by the Academic Coaches. Informational links will also exist on each school's Web site through which stakeholders can access progress information. The narrative does not provide specific information on how it will share information on the quality of its investments in such aspects of the plan as professional development, technology, and staff investments which modestly lowers the score for this section.

	Available	Score
(E)(2) Ongoing communication and engagement (5 points)	5	5

(E)(2) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant describes its belief that all stakeholders are change agents in the district's reform proposal. Thus, communication must be thorough, ongoing, and responsive. Strategies for ongoing communication and engagement with internal and external stakeholders include prominent use of the Academic Coach working both individually and in collaboration with school and district leadership to ensure both internal and external communication. The district appropriately also uses its new digital tools and online resources to expand the communication landscape.

	Available	Score
(E)(3) Performance measures (5 points)	5	4

(E)(3) Reviewer Comments:

The narrative describes performance measures aligned with the reform proposal's three overarching goals: accelerating student achievement; enhancing educator effectiveness; and readying students for college and career.

The logic behind setting the targets is sound, and the targets set support a desired change of closing the achievement gap. The narrative provides an adequate rationale for the district selecting each applicant-proposed measure.

Throughout the application narrative, the district has discussed how it has been and will continue to use data frequently to provide rigorous and timely formative assessment data to ensure individual student needs are met.

The narrative provides markers and timelines for how it will review and improve the measures over time to include quarterly review of student formative data.

The applicant does not apear to select the required social-emotional or wellness indicator, which lowers the score slightly.

(E)(4) Evaluating effectiveness of investments (5 points)	5	5

(E)(4) Reviewer Comments:

As stated in the narrative, the applicant appropriately dedicates project funds for the creation of a Coordinator of Evaluation to oversee and support all data collection and reporting activities, including tracking indicators to assess the fidelity of the implementation of project PEAK for the purposes of improving student outcomes. The district's evaluation plans are innovatively designed to concurrently build capacity among staff in data-driven decision-making and evaluation. One example of this is the modified CIPP model that will be used with the Academic Coaches to develop a site-based implementation plan, logic model, and evaluation plan for school-based activities. The evaluation plan and accompanying activities are very strong.

F. Budget and Sustainability (20 total points)

	Available	Score
(F)(1) Budget for the project (10 points)	10	9

(F)(1) Reviewer Comments:

The applicant's budget and budget narrative identifies funds from multiple sources, including other federal funds, grant funds, and foundation funds that will support the project and describes the specific areas in which those other sources of funds will be leveraged.

The narrative explains the district's rationale for its determination that the budget is reasonable and sufficient to support the development and implementation of the applicant's proposal using a per-student calculation. The narrative itself does not address the adequacy of the budget in terms of covering necessary costs to support the full implementation of a successful reform proposal. However, an examination of the overall budget, project budgets, and narratives reveals them to be reasonable and sufficient in every regard except for the inadequacy of funds dedicated to technical support for the vast technology infrastructure being built in this tech-rich reform proposal in a very large school district.

When taken in totality, the application provides a thorough and thoughtful rationale for investments and priorities including a description of all of the funds used to support the implementation of the proposal. The thinking is comprehensive and very well aligned to project goals.

One-time investments versus those that will be used for ongoing operational costs are clearly identified in the narrative, and the project has been thoughtfully designed with sustainability in mind throughout.

(F)(2) Sustainability of project goals (10 points)	10	9

(F)(2) Reviewer Comments:

Throughout the applicant's narrative, is it clear that they have been planning for sustainability through capacity-building, systems change, and retooling of roles and responsibilities rather than adding staff wherever possible. The one exception to this and an area of possible concern is in the position of the Academic Coaches, an added position carrying great responsibility throughout the plan.

The conditions in the state in terms of statutes and regulation supporting the personalization of education and other aspects of the applicant's plan also bode well for sustainability.

Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)

	Available	Score
Competitive Preference Priority (10 total points)	10	8

Competitive Preference Priority Reviewer Comments:

The application describes the district's partnership with an institution of higher learning – the University of South Florida –to implement its School-Wide Positive Behavior Support plan within its Response to Intervention-Behavior structure. The university provides the training related to positive behavior as well as s statewide database to track results. A further benefit of this partnership is the co-written grant work they have done to secure funding for other supportive projects to increase linkages between the district and a system of community support agencies to meet the needs of all students.

The narrative identifies six population-level desired results for students in the district that align with project proposal, all of which are non-educational outcomes. It is not clear from the application how the sixth outcome – Increasing the number of successful outcomes from behavior interventions – will be defined and what it looks like in practice. Thus, it is also unclear how that particular measure will be tracked.

The narrative describes how certain behavior indicators will be tracked by teachers using the dashboard and others related to behavior supports will be tracked by the university using an online system, the data and analysis of which are available to classroom teachers. The system as described appears to be very robust.

The narrative describes how the district will integrate this data with academic student performance data to use in collaboration with parents, students, and teachers to make decisions related to a student's individualized program, particularly related to intervention and supports. This approach is very positive and aligns nicely with the district's overall RTI-B plan and goals.

The narrative adequately describes how the district will use the data to target resources to improve results with special emphasis on students facing significant challenges and coordinate with community agencies to provide the necessary support to students and families.

The narrative provides a cursory explanation of how and when it plans to scale the model into high school through teacher training.

Using the RTI framework, progress-monitoring data will be appropriately tracked and shared over time with the intended purpose of Improving ongoing results.

The application narrative describes how the partnership with the university and the grant it shares will create school-specific resource maps illustrating linkages between the district's schools and agencies providing necessary supports for its students and families. A strength of this area of the plan is the emphasis on working with parents as true partners in the decision-making process around support services. . .an intentional effort to personalize support for students and families along with their personalized learning environment.

The narrative describes how the partnership would build the capacity of staff in school by providing them with tools and supports to track data on the behavior side of the RTI pyramid and use a structured problem-solving process to assess and meet student needs.

The narrative describes how the they will build capacity through the vehicle of Problem Solving Leadership Team in collaboration with the university which will meet regularly to review the school's data and determine appropriate responses.

The narrative describes how parents will have access to student data to include the behavioral data and how parents will be appropriately engaged in decision-making and collaborative discussions about potential solutions.

As discussed throughout the narrative, RTI calls for routinely assessing progress in implementing behavior plans to maximize impact and resolve challenges and problems. The district commits to doing so and throughout the narrative describes the process it will use to do so.

The plan narrative identifies annual ambitious yet achievable performance measures for all but the sixth measure as discussed above. It is not clear from the narrative how this measure will be defined, tracked, or measured.

Overall, the partnership with the university focuses on training and tracking of data. The work of connecting students to the necessary community-level supports that may be identified through the process is handled by the district.

Absolute Priority 1

	Available	Score
Absolute Priority 1	Met/Not Met	Met

Absolute Priority 1 Reviewer Comments:

This project is very well designed. The applicant coherently and comprehensively addresses how it will build on the core educational assurance areas to create learning environments that are designed to improve teaching and learning through personalization of education using strategies, tools, and supports that are aligned with college and career ready standards. It is clear from the narrative that careful thought and planning have gone in to ensuring the project will accelerate student achievement and deepen learning through this personalization and a focus on developing and hiring effective educators.

Total	210	171